RESTORATION REVIEW

The Greatest Enemy of Peace

Pride does not come through our animal nature, for it comes direct from hell. It is purely spiritual. It is the utmost evil. All other sins are fleabites in comparison.

— C.S. Lewis

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Blessed are the Peacemakers . . .

THE GREATEST ENEMY OF PEACE

Five great enemies to peace inhabit with us: viz., avarice, ambition, envy, anger, and pride. If those enemies were to be banished, we should infallibly enjoy perpetual peace.—Petrach

The old humanist who penned these words, who lived in the 14th century, spent his life studying the lives of the great men of antiquity. It was a search for the values by which men should live. His study led him to the conclusion that the peace that men long for cannot be realized until the five great enemies of peace are overcome, which he names in this quotation. We all agree with Petrarch that this old world would be greatly blessed if these enemies of peace could be defeated, even if that would not be the peace that only our Lord can bequeath to the human heart.

We are here concerned with but one of these enemies to peace, which Petrarch names last, as if it might summarize them all. The medieval theologians came up with a similar list, which they called *the seven deadly sins,* and they concluded that pride was the essence of them all. And it is our conclusion as we study our mission as peacemakers. Pride may make pieces but never peace, and there is no way to be a peacemaker until peace's greatest enemy is held at bay by the grace of God in our lives.

C. S. Lewis in his provocative little volume on *Mere Christianity* speaks of pride as the great sin. It was in reading what Lewis said about pride that led to the conversion of Charles Colson, Nixon's trigger man in the Watergate era. Filled with self-conceit and arrogant over the power he had over others, Colson was staggered by what Lewis said about pride, that sexual sins and drunkenness were but fleabites in comparison to pride. Lewis implies, of course, that unchastity and drunkenness are expressions of pride.

One point that caused Colson to look at his own life was that the more pride one has the more he dislikes pride in others, and that if one wants to measure his pride he only needs to ask himself how he likes it when others snub him or push him around or take advantage of him. If you resent the other fellow's conceit or if you are turned off by his efforts to impress you, it is a measure of your own pride, Lewis notes. Pride is essentially competitive, Lewis observes, and it is here that it raises its ugly head as the greatest enemy to peacemaking.

Pride is not satisfied with mere possession. It must have more than the other fellow. The intellectualist is not satisfied simply to be intellectual enough to do his thing, but he must be more intellectual than all his competitors. The proud woman is not content merely to be beautiful, for she must be the *most* beautiful. It is not enough to be rich or powerful, but to be richer and more powerful than one's peers. It is comparison that makes us proud. One is not proud who supposes he preaches or teaches well, but that he is better than those with whom he may be compared. Lewis notes that sexual desires may put two men in competition for the same girl, but it is pride that drives a man to take a fellow's girl away from him, not so much because he wants her, but to prove that he is the better man.

My friend Perry Gresham, recently president of Bethany College, tells in one of his sermons of one of his parishioners in Seattle who was elated over her Christmas bonus, it being far more than she expected. When he saw her a little later, she was downcast because the girl at the next desk had received *more* than she. Perry said that he knew better than to ask her why she cared about what someone else received so long as she was pleased with her gift. But he saw the need to go into his pulpit and preach against *pride.*

Lewis says pride has been the chief cause of misery in all of human history, for pride always means enmity. It is enmity, not only between man and man, but enmity to God. He insists that there is no way for one to know God as long as he is proud. Then how is it that so many religious people are proud?, he asks. It is that they are serving an imaginary God, one who allows them to look down on others while adulating themselves. When we look *up* to God and discover one who is immeasurably superior to ourselves, it is only then that we can pour contempt on all our pride. And if we look *up* to God we will no longer look *down* on others. In the presence of the *real* God we realize that we are nothing.

The worst of all vices smuggles itself into the center of our religion, Lewis asserts, not because it comes through our animal nature (it is too subtle for that), but because it comes direct from hell itself, being purely spiritual. This is why it is so deadly. One might overcome lust, cowardice, or a bad temper because of pride, such things being beneath him. Lewis says this causes the devil to laugh, for he is pleased for you to be cured of chilblains if he can give you cancer! And pride is spiritual cancer.

That the cancer of pride has eaten away at the unity and fellowship of the church is apparent enough if one but looks at the story of our divisions and sub-divisions. We have looked *down* on others for so long that we hardly ever look *up* to the one who teaches that we are to love and receive one another even as he has loved and received us. The pride of being right, while all others have to be wrong, has come right out of hell, and, as Lewis notes, it is purely spiritual. A dear brother who would not dare miss going to church will not only reject but even maltreat his sister in the Lord whom he dubs as "in error," too

proud to realize that that is precisely his condition before the God who teaches him to forgive even as he has been forgiven.

Pride has laid a heavy hand upon our party leaders. Even as I prepare this essay a journal comes to my desk in which one preacher is criticizing another one for advocating a course of action that, according to him, would compromise the position that "the loyal brethren" have always taken. He says, "We are going to have to admit that we have been wrong all these years." But what is bad about admitting that one has been wrong even for a lifetime, except for pride?

Many preachers have allowed pride to bring them to the place where they are not to be questioned by anyone, not even by their elders. They are our infallible ones. They have been to college and have learned all that needs to be known, and they leave the impression that they have arrived and are no longer truthseekers. Some even dare to dictate what the rank and file, who of course are beneath them, can read and not read. And they certainly have no interest in their sermons being challenged. A few of them can even tell you who is going to heaven and who is not, who may be fellowshipped, and who are our "brothers in error." These are the ones who write bulls of excommunication and presume to "withdraw" from churches and preachers even in distant states. It takes a pompous divine to assume such prerogatives. Such ones are not peacemakers.

One might think that since I have spent much of my life on the university campus that I have had my fill of intellectual pride. There is of course such pride in the academic world, but it is not as manifest as one might suppose. Among the humblest folk that I've known have been the best educated, for they, like old Socrates, have learned just enough to realize how ignorant they really are. To the contrary, I find much more intellectual pride and downright arrogance in our churches, pulpits, and journals than in the world of academe. If the pope is razzed, a nun made fun of, aged and dedicated scholars ridiculed, scientific research scoffed, and sincere people in general put down, it is much more likely to come from one of our pulpits or one of our schools of preaching than from anywhere else.

"Pride goeth before destruction" one of the proverbs warns us, "and a haughty spirit before a fall." Even as I write these words comes news of a church in Dallas that has been so judgmental of other Churches of Christ in the area that have dared to veer from the party line, or the *preachers* of said church I should say since the rank and file is usually above party politics. Well, the two preachers that have been so hard on others have now declared war on each other and parted company.

And there is word from Tennessee concerning David Lipscomb College. The chairman of the Board has been indicted by a grand jury for conducting a tractor-theft ring, and the former president, longtime leader of Churches of Christ in that state, has left the true

church and has gone to the Presbyterian Church, explaining that he finds more understanding of his personal problems among the Presbyterians. This is the college that made it so hard on its faculty that they could not even attend the wrong kind of Church of Christ, namely the Belmont congregation. If our brother finds a closer walk with our blessed Lord among the Presbyterians, I will rejoice, but this experience should cause him to have second thoughts about firing faculty for attending a different Church of Christ than those politically-accepted ones in Nashville. In a college *west* of the Mississippi a faculty person was fired for attending a meeting of the Full Gospel Men's Fellowship!

But let's call this what it is: dirty, cheap church politics perpetrated by arrogant and frightened preachers, editors, and college leaders, and it is all the ugly offspring of sinful pride. If they can spend a lifetime preserving "the truth" in the right church, and then take off with the Presbyterians when their own life gets screwed up, one is left to wonder if they really believed all that legalistic stuff in the first place. And when you conduct a policy that rejects sisters and brothers for being "charismatic" and are at the same time the ringleader of a gang that steals tractors from hard-working farmers so as to sell them on the black market, you can understand why a lot of the college kids laugh at our religion.

There is no pride like institutional pride, for it has a way of alternating with personal pride. Even Alexander Campbell, who was usually magnanimous, could not abide criticism of his Bethany projects. When Tolbert Fanning, who had his own paper and college, leveled a criticism Bethanyward, Campbell retorted, "Brother Fanning is just jealous of Bethany College and the *Millennial Harbinger!"* That cruel judgment, which almost certainly was not true since Fanning almost worshipped Campbell, was published to the brotherhood, breaking the Nashville editor's heart and causing him to regret that he'd ever seen a paper or a college.

That is what pride does. But Fanning got off light, for when I questioned the prerogatives of a Tennessee Church of Christ college, they put me in jail. And while in jail that night I too was sorry that I ever saw a "Christian" college! If all the in-fighting and pettiness that goes on behind the scenes of *our* colleges were known to the brethren, they would wonder how *Christian* they really are. At one of our colleges some years ago the administration became so oppressive and unyielding that the students went on strike, bringing the educative process to a standstill. The president had several chances to avoid the downfall that finally came, but he would not budge. The incident received nationwide news coverage. The Board had to fire the very man that founded the college! "Pride goeth before destruction."

Pride is the sin that divides Christians and the sin that preserves the divisions. We do not need Petrarch's list of the enemies of peace, for Jesus has provided one for us. It is not the things that go *into* man that defile him, he assures us, but the things that come out of his heart, and he lists things like covetousness, deceit, and pride. Pride defiles! Yes, and pride divides! As Lewis aptly puts it, pride comes right out of hell itself, being the spiritual sin.

It is noteworthy that Paul did not want a novice appointed as elder, "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil," that is, condemned by pride as the devil was condemned by pride. So pride is the beginning and end of all sin, and self-conceit can be the undoing of us all.

There is only one way out and that is through him who is "the way, the truth, and the life." When Jesus makes his home in us through the indwelling Spirit, we will see ourselves more like God sees us and pride will lose its grip on us. Humility, the opposite of pride, is the fruit of the Spirit rather than our own virtue, and one that we are never really conscious of, for in dying to the old man of sin we are simply not all that conscious of ourselves anymore. When our lives are hid with Christ in God we look beyond ourselves to the welfare of others and to causes of heavenly dimension.

Unless one has this peace within her, she will have no way to be a peacemaker. If we make something, we have to have the necessary ingredient with which to make it. - *the Editor*

I for one have not lost my passion for a united church, and I am not content to sit by and do nothing. I am not satisfied with the sect from which I inherited all the troubles and heartaches. I know what it is to be among people who care nothing for each other or the world around them. You cannot get them to do any personal work. We just keep house for the Lord. I can see why youth think as they so often do about the church.—*Sam Davis, Clarksburg, WV*

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ARE WE HUNG UP ON BAPTISM?

Let me emphasize at the outset that while I do not believe *in* baptism, I most certainly believe that it is the act that God has ordained whereby the believer in the Messiah responds in obedience to the gospel. It is not regeneration, but it is *the bath* of regeneration according to Tit. 3:5. It does not actually wash filth from the body or sin from the soul, but it is "the answer of a good conscience toward God" according to 1 Pet. 3:21. According to Acts 2:38 it is in some sense "for the remission of sins." All this I believe unequivocally. When I say that I do not believe *in* baptism, I mean that my faith is only in Christ and in no act or ordinance. No act or ordinance saves, not even an act of righteousness (Tit. 3:5), for only Christ saves. If the Scriptures say that baptism saves, which they do in I Pet. 3:21, it can only mean that baptism is the act in which we respond in faith to what God has done for us through Christ. With all the great creeds of Christendom I believe implicitly that baptism is the door into the church of Jesus Christ.

But is it not possible to distort a truth by giving it undue eminence? If baptism is the door into the church, is it not possible to become so preoccupied with the door as to neglect the house as a whole? If in our early history we found the church at large neglecting this important ordinance of God, is it not possible that we overreacted in our efforts to correct their remission and have thus made baptism mean more than God ever intended.?

I will share with you a few examples of what I mean.

One of our better known Texas preachers was telling me how much more the grace of God is being preached than it used to be, which gladdens his heart. But he went on to explain how they manage to place more emphasis upon the grace of God and still preach baptism, for, as he put it, "They *have* to preach baptism." It struck me as an odd description of a people presumedly motivated by Scripture above all else. Peter's concern on Pentecost was to proclaim the crucified Christ as the risen Lord. When he at last provoked his audience into making inquiry, he told them to repent and be baptized. His intent was clearly to preach Christ, not baptism.

But when our brother says the preachers, even those that are turned on to grace, have to preach baptism, he may well have meant that they have to preach baptism if they expect to hold their jobs with their churches. Not unlike Pavlov's dog, our people have been so conditioned to hearing sermons on baptism that they cannot spiritually salivate unless some reference is made to baptism. Some preachers manage to sustain their loyal image by making reference to baptism, however slight it may be, in every sermon. It keeps the saliva flowing!

Another example is the pictures the missionaries send home to their churches and in their mailouts for the solicitation of funds. Almost invariably there will be a picture of someone being baptized. That is, of course, all right within itself, but when they nearly all do it so much of the time it may well indicate something that is not so good. Have they learned that they have a much better chance getting money if they present concrete evidence that they are baptizing folk? Does not this overabundance of photos of baptisms say that we are a baptism-oriented people and that this ordinance has become to us a virtual *sine qua non* of the Christian faith?

If John Mark had had a Brownie in his travels with the apostles (and it would be he who would be a shutterbug if any of them would have been, right?), we could only guess as to the kind of pictures he would send back home. Maybe one of Paul talking to soldiers at a guard station alongside a highway. Or a candid shot of old Elymas the sorcerer. Maybe a few closeups of some of their new Gentile sisters and brothers, especially the sisters. Or maybe one of him and Barnabas as they disembarked on the island of Cyprus. Yes, and maybe Mark would have taken a shot or two of someone being baptized (which would of course prove once for all that it was by immersion!), but the brethren back home would surely have thought it strange if they received picture after picture after picture of someone being baptized. Some elder would surely have said, “The young man has a one-track mind, hasn’t he?” Or maybe they would have supposed that the Brownie he had was one that only took pictures of people being baptized!

The third example comes out of Abilene itself, and where else should one look for *bona fide* Church of Christ behavior? A letter mailed out to multitudes by the Herald of Truth Radio and Television Programs reads in part: “Those who responded will receive the material which they requested, then a series of monthly teaching letters — a Bible correspondence course by letter, in effect. When the time is right, they will be contacted by nearby brethren and hopefully led to baptism.” (Letter dated Nov. 29, 1978 and signed by Batsell Barrett Baxter).

One would suppose that in this context the last words would read *led to Christ.* Brother Baxter and the Herald of Truth folk do believe, of course, in leading people to Christ, and they would insist that this is what Herald of Truth is all about. I am not questioning that, but I am saying that our language exposes our inordinate emphasis on baptism. Why do we have to talk about leading people to baptism? Why not lead them to Christ? After all, the two concepts may be quite different, far more than we have thus far recognized. Usually if one is truly led to Christ, baptism finds its rightful place, but one may be “led to baptism” without really coming to know Jesus as Lord. *Led to baptism.* Should we not be suspicious of that kind of language?

But let's face it, such lingo lends itself to the Church of Christ mind. We are much more likely to say, "I was baptized when I was 13" than to say "I accepted Christ when I was 13." One of our preachers is more likely to describe the results of a gospel meeting with "We had five baptisms" than with "We had five to accept the Lord." We may not want to admit it, but we are more baptism-oriented than Jesus-oriented, and we are less than satisfied if efforts like Herald of Truth merely bring people to Jesus. The Baptists do that. We want them baptized, *as* we *understand baptism* — which is of course the same as the New Testament teaches! They are to be *our* converts, *our* way!

What a rude awakening it would be to learn after all we've said and done that we are wrong on baptism. We certainly are not right because we can whip "the sects" in debates on the subject or out-argue everybody. Nor are we right because we can quote a lot of proof texts or because we baptize a lot of people. Nor simply because we immerse and do it "for remission of sins." We may err, not so much because we know not the Scriptures, but because we know not the *spirit* of the Scriptures.

It was true of the Jews with their most revered ordinances, the Sabbath and circumcision. They erred, not because they had the facts down wrong, but through a false emphasis. They stressed the legalities of these ordinances until they had them out of focus and no longer properly proportioned to the whole of religion and especially the purpose of religion. When the Maccabees first rebelled against their Syrian oppressors, they were at the mercy of their enemies since they would not fight on the Sabbath. The tide turned when Judas Maccabaeus decided that human life was more precious than a meticulous observance of the Sabbath. At a later date Jesus had difficulty teaching the same people that if an ox is to be shown mercy on the Sabbath then surely a *man* is. That the Sabbath was given for man's good (and not to oppress him!) and not the other way around may sound like a simple truth, but the Jews, hung up as they were about the Sabbath, had more than a little trouble accepting it.

Even before Jesus came the prophets tried to get God's people to place the outward in proper proportion to the inward. Many Jews believed that if one were only circumcised nothing else mattered much. But the prophets urged that the *real* circumcision is not so much what man does to the flesh, but what God does to the heart. Circumcision must symbolize inward renewal. The Law sometimes addressed the circumcised Hebrews as if their circumcision meant nothing, such as referring to their "uncircumcised hearts" (Lev. 26:41). Moses referred to himself as having "uncircumcised lips" because the Israelites were circumcised in the flesh but not in spirit (Ex. 6:12). If Jeremiah could say his people's ear is uncircumcised (6:10), then it could be that our people's ear is unbaptized.

Even more remarkable is Ezek. 44:9 where God rejects the uncircumcised in heart (who had been properly circumcised in the flesh) as well as those who were complete strangers to His covenant, uncircumcised in the flesh. So in Col. 2:11 where Paul says “In union with him you were circumcised, not with the circumcision that is made by men, but with Christ’s own circumcision, which consists of being freed from the power of this sinful body,” it was in the spirit of what the prophets had already emphasized. God has always wanted man’s heart. If the external ordinances do not represent a heart yielded to God, they mean nothing.

The ultimate circumcision ‘that the prophets envisioned could come only in Christ, for only in him does one find the power to be set free of sin. The apostle is telling us that we are all to be circumcised with this circumcision of the heart, which comes through yielding our hearts to Christ through faith and repentance.

Then in the next verse he says: “For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ through faith in the active power of God, who raised him from death.”

Baptism does not take the place of circumcision. The apostle is rather showing that circumcision is God’s continuing purpose for His people—a circumcision of the heart, which is really what He wanted under Moses, of which fleshly circumcision was only a symbol. So we have to conclude that baptism is not the circumcision that the apostle calls for, but the yielded, contrite heart—a circumcised *heart.* He calls it “the circumcision of Christ.” It is what Christ works in our inmost self through his indwelling Spirit. Literally it was done with a knife upon the flesh; in Christ it is done upon the human spirit by the visitation of the Holy Guest of heaven.

This “circumcision of Christ” is formalized in baptism. If something very significant has not happened in one’s inmost self, if he has not been “circumcised” by Christ, then baptism has little or no meaning. It may happen that a real transformation, a heart circumcision, does not come until years later. In such cases baptism would have a retrospective symbolic value, as if one would say, “I was baptized into Christ, but only now am I coming to realize its significance.” It is to overdo the symbol to be baptized again and again and again, even though it might well be true that we keep on experiencing now and again “the circumcision of Christ.”

We should see here the stark reality of circumcision as a symbol of what Christ does in us and for us. The mercy and severity of his truth, which may cut and hurt in its healing, removes that which separates us from God and sets us apart from a world that would otherwise hold us captive to sin. Baptism is our assurance that such surgery has been performed by the Spirit of Christ in our hearts.

If the Jews were hung up on circumcision by overstressing its outward form to the extent that the God of heaven considered them uncircumcised, then cannot the baptized Church of Christ, many of whom are baptized even a second time, be so preoccupied with the "rightness" of baptism to the neglect of weightier matters as to be viewed by heaven as unbaptized? If the apostle could say "In Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (Gal. 6:15), then there might be instances in which he would say the same about baptism.

No one championed the cause of primitive baptism anymore than Alexander Campbell, and yet he realized that even that ordinance could be distorted by being made a fetish. He wrote: "The preachers of 'essentials' as well as the preacher of 'non-essentials' frequently err. The Essentialist may disparage the heart, while the Non-essentialist despises the institution. The latter makes void the institutions of Heaven, while the former appreciates not the mental bias on which God looketh most." *(Mill. Harb.*, 1837, p. 413)

God looketh most into man's heart, Campbell recognized, and it is this insight that we are likely to miss in our emphasis upon any outward form. It should cause us to think when Alexander Campbell, who published volumes on baptism and defended its proper place in the scheme of redemption on the polemic platform, should write the following: "It is the image of Christ the Christian looks for and loves, and this does not consist in being exact in a few items, but in general devotion to the whole truth as far as known." *(Ibid*, p. 412)

General devotion to the whole truth as far as known. This does not represent the thinking of most of our folk in Churches of Christ today, and this is my complaint. We have overdone it on baptism to the neglect of "the image of Christ" and "general devotion to the whole truth as far as known." We must restore our sense of proper proportion, and this comes only be making Christ the center of all we do and think, and the *whole* of the Scriptures rather than a select path of prooftexts.

We should never lead anybody to baptism, but to the crucified Christ who is the Lord of Life. Once his Spirit circumcises their hearts, as those on Pentecost were "cut to the heart," then we, like the apostle Peter, can instruct them to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. And if God's love story has really touched their inmost souls, we'll not have to argue with them about being baptized, for they will respond in loving obedience as "the answer of a good conscience toward God."—*the Editor*

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Highlights in Restoration History . . .

THIRTY FIVE YEARS LATER

The most quoted statement from our pioneers is probably that one from Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address* that reads:

> That the Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else; as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.

It is unfortunate that this weighty insight is not as well known among non-instrument churches as it is in other wings of our Movement. One way for us to quicken our concern for the unity of all believers in Christ is to move inside this statement and let it become a part of our thinking. We need to see what Campbell saw, that the church by its very nature is one and cannot be otherwise. Not only did God intend it to be one, but He constituted it one, and so it is *essentially* one. It is therefore, strictly speaking, a contradiction to speak of the Church of Christ being divided. It *cannot* be divided, for a *divided* Church of Christ is not the true Church of Christ.

But there is the true Church of Christ upon earth, made up of all those who are in Christ, wherever they may be, including those who are unwillingly or unconsciously caught in a sectarian situation. This church is not to be identified with those folk that we may generally associate with Abilene or Nashville, or with Cincinnati or Indianapolis, who wear the name "Church of Christ" or its linguistic equivalent "Christian Church," though we would presume that many of these people would be a part of the one, holy, apostolic, catholic Church of Christ.

This is what Campbell came to see, that in spite of all "the jarrings and janglings of sectarian strife," as he put it, there is nonetheless God's real church upon the earth, and that church is one. As he looked at all the sects, none of which he recognized as *the* Church of Christ, it was apparent that while the true church is really one, its unity was not fully realized by those who professed to be Christians. The church's unity is real but not fully realized. That is a good way to put it. So all partyism should end and the Church of Christ upon earth should be manifest to the world as a loving, united community. That is how the world will know that we are truly Jesus' disciples.

Thomas Campbell did not believe that the true church did not exist on earth when he arrived on the American frontier and saw that sectarianism was as rife in the New World as it was in his native Ireland. His task was not to restore the church that had gone out of existence. The Anabaptists and other sects of the Radical Reformation believed that, but our pioneers did not. They were reformers, not "restorationists" like the Anabaptists. The true church has always prevailed against the gates of hades, as Jesus promised, and has always existed upon the earth, in the midst of and in spite of sectarianism. So Campbell's task was to restore to the church (that already existed) its real but hidden unity. And so he launched a movement to unite the Christians in all the sects.

But the main point of this article 'is to pass along a footnote on Campbell's famous quotation, one that is dated thirty five years later. It reveals that in 1844, when he was the Movement's aged patriarch, Campbell had a better idea of how the church's hidden unity is to be recovered than he had back in 1809 when he first penned those lines.

In writing to a friend from the home of his renowned son, where he spent his last years, he recalled the old quote from the *Declaration and Address.* This is how he put it the last time around: "The church of Christ upon earth is constitutionally and essentially one; therefore, the first relative duty of every member of it is to preserve this unity by loving each other as Christ has loved them." *(Mill. Harb.,* 1844. p. 104)

We are slow of heart to see what Campbell came to realize, that unity is restored and preserved through the love with which Christ has loved us. We have bought the myth that unity comes through doctrinal agreement, which, if true, dooms the church to endless fission. People are not one in Christ simply because they see everything alike, if indeed there are such people. If they come to see the millennium alike, or the music question alike, or agree on tongue-speaking, it does not follow that they are any closer together in Christ. It is love, not doctrinal accuracy, that binds everything together in perfect harmony, according to Col. 3:14.

Considering all the fuss we have made over the organ, including myriads of debates, it will sound far out to suggest that those who differ on this question would be no more united in Christ if they should come to see eye-to-eye on the question. If the organ issue were resolved by one side giving it up or the other side accepting it, *we would be no closer together than we are now.* We would then agree on that matter, but that would be all. That has nothing to do with being one in Christ and sharing in the fellowship of the Spirit. We preserve the unity of the Spirit only by accepting one another in the love with which Christ has loved us. This we are commanded to do, organ or no organ.

"We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 Jn. 3:16). I am to lay down my life for my sister because Jesus laid down his life for me. Whether she has a piano in her church is beside the point. Whether she is right or wrong on this or that doctrine is beside the point. I am to love her, even die for her, because she is my sister.

It is that love—*and nothing else*—that preserves the unity and fellowship that the Spirit has given us. It is *within* that loving fellowship that any differences can be resolved that need to be resolved. If love does not resolve the problem, it will transcend it, "hiding a multitude of faults." Never has Satan sold us such a bill of goods as this notion that we must work out the differences before we can be one in Christ. It is Satan's way of keeping us separated from each other.

Some have called Thomas Campbell "the man of the Book," for few men have loved the Bible like he did. But he realized that no book, not even the Bible, can make men and women one, not even if they have it all memorized and agree on every point. It is God's love story, revealed in the Bible, that unites us, even if we may not understand a lot of things in the Bible and disagree on some of the things we suppose we understand. Heaven gave us a Person to make us one, not a Book. It is when I reach out and accept you in Christ's love, and you me, that we become one. Unity cannot be achieved or preserved any other way. God help us to see this beautiful truth!—*the Editor*

I feel that the Lord continues to open the eyes of many in Montgomery. I hope and pray that the message of love and fellowship that you teach may spread among our own people until we are filled with the Spirit and are truly united and at peace with all men.—*James Hilyer, Montgomery, AL*

I hope that someday I will see unity among God's people.—*Mrs. J. R. Cobb, El Paso, TX*

Your little paper is read quite widely in our congregation. It gives the mind fodder for the long winter nights.—*Gordon Ellis, Thunder Bay, Ontario*

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Pilgrimage of Joy. . . No. 32

THE COW PASTURE DEBATE

W. Carl Ketcherside

My first discussion with Brother G. K. Wallace has been referred to as "The Cow Pasture Debate." There was no place in the area large enough to accommodate the expected crowds, so brethren secured a huge tent and pitched it in a large field five miles north of Paragould. Hundreds of people came from many states. Hotels and motels for miles around were filled to capacity. The debate began on June 30 and closed July 4. J. A. McNutt was selected as timekeeper for Brother Wallace. My uncle, L. E. Ketcherside, operated in the same capacity for me.

The first two nights Brother Wallace affirmed, "The employment of a preacher to preach for the congregation as now practiced by the church of Christ, at 2nd and Walnut Streets, in Paragould, Ark., is scriptural." The third night I affirmed, "The New Testament authorizes an evangelist to exercise authority in a congregation which he has planted until men are qualified and appointed as bishops." On the fourth night, Brother Wallace affirmed, "The organization, by Christians, of schools such as Freed-Hardeman College is in harmony with the New Testament scriptures." On the last night I affirmed that it was contrary to the New Testament scriptures.

It is not my intention to review the substance of the debate. It was put into print and can be read in its entirety. Brother Wallace was a worthy opponent. A typical "Church of Christ" debater, he was constantly watching for a chance at the jugular. He knew all of the debater's tactics, was witty and sharp and one did not dare to let down his guard. I think his weakest moments came in his dealing with the difference between preaching and teaching and gospel and doctrine. He read the wrong definition from both Thayer's Lexicon and Webster's Dictionary.

There were scores of preachers present, many representing both positions. A few did not have clear cut ideas about either. Each afternoon public meetings were held at Beech Grove. In these any brother could say anything upon his heart by way of strength and edification. It was decided that no discussion of or reference to the debate would be made in these meetings. It was probably the greatest array of public talent ever assembled at Beech Grove. Every meeting was stimulating and uplifting.

The debates drew people from the area who came as Puritans would attend a bear-baiting, or those south of the border would go to a cock-fight. Not too many of them understood the issues but they liked the excitement. This was evidenced when men gathered in country stores like the one at Hooker's Switch. The question of the debate

came up as they sat talking on the front porch, and one old resident said, “Well, for my money, that Baptist from Saint Louis is giving that Campbellite about all he needs.”

One of the greatest blessings which came to me during the debate was to meet Leroy Garrett. Students from David Lipscomb College called him in Dallas after the first night of debate, urging him to come. He deeply impressed me when I first shook hands with him. We held much in common but we also differed in our concepts regarding many items. We had been reared in different areas. I did not know the brethren with whom he had worked. He did not know the ones with whom I had labored. But both of us knew Jesus, and because of Him we wanted to know each other better.

It was only a short time later when he called me from Winfield, Alabama, where he was in a tent meeting. I went down to spend several days with him in the small hotel. There, in the presence of three David Lipscomb College students, we explored the points upon which we differed for three whole days. We began talking early in the morning and continued until late at night, merely taking time out to go to the tent for meeting. The people in the community did not know what was taking place as we sought to understand one another and the Word of God. Later we set up meetings in homes in Dallas, and then decided to widen the scope and invite all to participate. These were some of the most profitable and soul-searching experiences of my life.

Two weeks after the debate I returned to Beech Grove for two weeks. Each afternoon we held a two-hour session of Bible study. It was open, free and positive. It was generally agreed the debate had helped our cause. People from many other congregations came to hear and be blessed. An instructor from Harding College came to lead the singing. Brethren from various parties came and went away without rancor. The little congregation now had a reputation all over the United States. It had refused to roll over and play dead!

Before I leave the debate I must tell you of what happened to our antagonists later on. G. K. Wallace who was a Bible teacher at Florida College left the school and turned against it. Franklin Puckett who came with him to issue the challenge split with Brother Wallace and died on the other side of a rift which knew no reconciliation. The two congregations in Paragould whose preachers signed the article in Firm Foundation sounding the alarm that I had invaded the south, fell out with one another. My uncle and I attended a debate between them at 2nd and Walnut. The alienation exists to this day. Many of the preachers who attended the debate have since that time become involved in another schism and are attacking each other.

I am not glad these things happened. I am saddened by them. But I now understand why they came about. They are a built-in part of the System. There will be trouble in every congregation eventually. There will be new divisions in every generation. All of the

programs, all of the excitement, all of the hullabaloo, will not prevent it. Legalism leads to division. It can lead nowhere else for men in the flesh. So long as men substitute love of law for the law of love trouble is waiting in the wings. It will come in on cue. Church of Christism is like any other "ism."

Four days after the debate finished, Brother D. Austen Sommer died of a heart attack as he sat in his home in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was born in Kelton, Pennsylvania, on March 28, 1878, and was 74 years of age. His departure brought home to me the fact that the generation of those who had influenced my younger years in the faith was retreating into the shadows. The Sommer family, which once exercised such an influence in the northern states was disappearing. Composed of men who knew the Book but who were jealous of each other, they had fragmented both their family and congregations throughout the land. Yet it was sad for me to see them die disillusioned and forlorn.

In October, 1952, Brother Garrett launched a monthly journal called *Bible Talk.* In his initial editorial he wrote: "We feel that institutionalism and professionalism are teammates in that inauspicious game of apostasy into which they have enticed the church. " He proposed to expose them for what they were, while at the same time dealing with worldliness, health habits, use of leisure time, the Christian home and worship. It was quite a sizeable order for a paper.

The first issue bore a picture of the youthful-looking editor and Ansel Chandler of Tyler, Texas, wrote that he was a graduate of Freed-Hardeman College, Abilene Christian College, Southern Methodist University, Princeton University and Harvard University. *Bible Talk* was the forerunner for *Restoration Review* and did much to define issues confronting a great segment of the restoration movement sparked by the Campbells and their contemporaries.

The 1953 Mission Messenger featured a series of articles by Albert E. Winstanley, on various topics. At the same time I started one on "The Elders of the Church." There were twelve articles about the bishops dealing with an in-depth study of their qualifications, selection and appointment. The January issue carried a picture and an account of the golden wedding anniversary of Brother and Sister W. E. Ballenger.

He had begun preaching two years after I was born and had planted new congregations all over the central states. Meticulous in dress and with shoes shined like a mirror, he had endeared himself to rural and village people because of his genial attitude. Some of them said he could walk through mud and none of it would dare rub off on him.

In February I went to Valdosta, Georgia at the invitation of brethren who had attended the debate. My mission was to visit and talk with preachers and others in the area. It was the first time I had been that far south, but I knew that Valdosta was the home of Jessie F. Love who had visited us in Missouri shortly after my father was immersed into Christ. He was a curiosity in our village with his broad southern dialect. I located his wife who was still living in Valdosta.

I talked with Joe Goodspeed, minister at Remerton, and Evans McMullen who was laboring at Hahira. Both were graduates of Florida Christian College. Other brethren came from Florida, Alabama and other parts of Georgia to converse with me. We met in a home and talked until midnight every day.

On January 24, J. A. Freed died at Topeka, Kansas, at the age of 77 years. The day of his death was also that of his 49th wedding anniversary. He had been a friend of our family for many years and was a relative of the Brother Freed who founded the college at Henderson, Tennessee. J. A. Freed had proclaimed the gospel for a half century, and was well known.

On February 20 I began a series of Bible studies in the American Legion hall in Paragould, Arkansas, despite a good deal of opposition. I was on the radio daily discussing trends in the religious world. The result was that our crowds were good, reaching a total of 150 in many sessions. In the April issue of our paper I announced that I was scheduled for studies in Texas, Tennessee, and Georgia during the year. The increasing number of calls made it impossible to continue the Saint Louis studies. We canceled them after fifteen years of continuous teaching.

During the Arkansas debate, Sterl Watson, who was preaching for the West End Church of Christ in Saint Louis, arose and issued a challenge for me to debate Brother Wallace on the same issues in Saint Louis. Being satisfied with the Arkansas encounter, which was put in print, I saw little use of a repetition of the debate. But before Brother Watson left Arkansas for Saint Louis he announced that he was coming to the city to run me out of it, so when he repeated the challenge to the congregation at Manchester Avenue there was little we could do except to agree to another debate.

Each congregation appointed a committee to work out the details and it was agreed that I would debate Brother Wallace in Carpenter’s Hall October 26-30. It was decided that the debate would again be printed and thus four of my discussions would be in book form.

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BOOK NOTES

The way the divorce question is being handled is reaching tragic dimensions. Several churches have taken the stand that they will not even baptize divorced people, and there is a concerted effort to make this a general practice. So this issue must have much more exposure, for we are persuaded that such an oppressive measure is without Scriptural warrant. A booklet entitled *Adulterous Marriages* by Darrell Foltz, 1625 Oak, Hoxie, KS 67704, is part of the answer. Send one dollar directly to him, not to us, and he will send you two copies of this very helpful 18-page treatment. It deals with the question of whether the divorced and remarried person has to separate in order to become a Christian.

There are some writers that are always worth reading, and A. Hunter, now retired from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, is one of these. A lifetime of study has gone into his provocative *Jesus Lord and Saviour.* He starts with how to read and interpret the Bible and goes on to treat the great themes of the NT. It is exciting. 4.45 postpaid.

Someone wrote and asked about the best way to deal with Jehovah's Witnesses. A. A. Hoekema's book by that title is highly recommended and is only 2.45 postpaid. Similar titles at same price by same author on Mormons, Christian Science, and Seventh-Day Adventists.

At only 4.25 (postpaid) each you can start your collection of the 17-volume *Daily Bible Study* on the NT by William Barkley, which is widely hailed as one of the best and perhaps the most readable and informative of all. Ouida and I are reading through all 17 volumes with great profit. It is ideal for short, daily devotionals.

Still one of the best books I ever read is John Stott's *Christ the Controversalist.* If you want to understand the real issues between Christ and the Pharisees, and what the Christian faith is all about, this is the book. 4.45 postpaid.

Some of our newer subscribers might like to know what we were saying a few years back. For 3.00 we will send you 18 back issues, picked at random as far as 10 years back. This is our best bargain of all and those who order are pleased with the extra reading. At same time you can order our tract, *Body Ministry,* which is ideal to enclose in letters. 12 for 1.00.

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When you move, please send us **both** your old and new addresses.

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

Sometime back the College Church of Christ in Victoria, Texas issued a statement on the kind of preacher they were then looking for. First on their list of qualifications is that he should be one who seeks to build the congregation "from among the unchurched, not from denominational groups or other Churches of Christ." Second in rank is that he should have an understanding of grace as the power that saves. They also ask that the man believe in and teach the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and that he value the unity of believers above dogmatism and doctrine. As for his pulpit ministry, they ask that he be Bible-oriented and have a balance between Old and New Testaments, and they want him to have a positive attitude toward their religious neighbors. This is a non-instrument, main-line Church of Christ deep in the heart of Texas, and you can be assured that this is the new direction that our churches will be taking, and it may not be as long in coming as some think.

The ministry of the Alpine Hills Church of Christ in Mobile is a different story, for their Restoration Leadership Ministry, designed to convert preachers from "the denominations," now employs five men. The elders report in eight years that 100 such preachers have become "simply New Testament Christians and gospel preachers." But a substantial number of these are from independent Christian Churches who were already "Christians only." Their January newsletter tells of one more conversion, and again the one being "reached" is from the Christian Church. A brother in South Dakota sent us the news item and wrote in the margin: ‘’‘Is this Christian unity? Must we all ‘be reached’ by the acappella persuasion before there can be Christian unity? The Alpine Hills elders might answer that one for us. But one thing I know, this notion that one finds "the truth" in leaving one party and joining another one is only so much game-playing. There simply is not that much difference between the "Christian Church" and the "Church of Christ," and besides the God of heaven does not recognize such sects anyhow. There is only one church

and that is the Body of Christ, and all of us who are *in* Jesus are in that church, and we do not have to go anywhere to have "the truth" that is in Christ Jesus. We should be ashamed of ourselves when we seek to "reach" one who is already a Christian and urge him to move from one "fellowship" to another "fellowship." It reeks of sectarianism! If it is a better job, or any job at all, that these preachers are after, which has been apparent enough in some cases, would it not be more honest to say so? What the Lord must think of the games we play!

The Southwest Church in Dallas, even though they are "our" folk, wear only that mode of identification, whether on signboard, bulletin, or letterhead. They are simply the church meeting at 2760 Emmett. Why is this so rare for people who claim to be undenominational? If we are serious about that claim, why do we hold so tenaciously to a denominational name, using Church of Christ exclusively? We are even impatient with those who "steal" our name, as we suppose some Christian Churches do. If we are simply the church of the New Testament, why not do as they do at Southwest? Are we afraid that folk may not recognize us for what we really are?

The Central Church of Christ in St. Louis recently issued this statement about the rights of women in its bulletin: "I'm sick and tired of all this senseless talk about the role of the female, the role of the male, equal but different, different but unique, ad nauseum. Let's come on out with it. Women are equal, top quality, A-1 members of the human race, United States of America and Church of Christ with ALL the rights and privileges accorded to thereof and forthwith. We need women in government, education, business, and most of all in the stale confines of the Church of Christ business meetings where the menfolk have just about run out of ideas on how to fight sin and watch the Super Bowl at the same time."

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